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Dear All

We've had some very productive discussions so far, and have reached consensus on editorial process/policies and the content of the front section, of the Biology journal. These will be written up over the next few days, and circulated for comments.

At this stage we are circulating a couple of discussion documents. The first is about the PloS Medicine journal, and the second summarizes an approach to first, second and third tier journals. We would like to devote some time to the discussion of these topics tomorrow.

In addition, we want start work on an FAQ document that will be posted on our web site. It would be great if Mike, Pat and Harold could spend a few minutes to note down the most difficult FAQ,s that you have been faced with so far. These could be from any of the constituencies that might be affected by PloS publications: readers, authors, librarians, societies. Please also send us any Powerpoint slides that you have used for presentations about PloS.

*~? Avoid Killing  
Societies  
- Costs*

We're also attaching the agenda for this weekend. Please feel free to ask any questions about it. We'll be circulating minutes from the meeting later in the week.

Here's the proposed agenda for the Monday conference call:

- 1) FAQ,s (Mark)
- 2) PloS Medicine (Philip)
- 3) PloS journals tiers (Barbara)
- 4) Update on RFP proposals from Rebecca

We look forward to speaking to you all tomorrow, and we'll send you the number in the morning.

B, M, P and V



Boston agenda.doc



PloS tiers.doc



Scope\_draftFeb16.doc

# Agenda – Boston Retreats

## General

- The first Boston Retreat could focus on the editorial aspects of the PLoS publications. We could consider the nature of the journals and how they will operate from an editorial point of view. At the end of this discussion, we should be in a position to construct a rough timeline of the key landmarks for the launch of the journals.
- The timeline can be expanded with Rebecca's input at the second Boston Retreat – also consider issues such as marketing, production, resources and budgeting.

## February 15-17

### Barbara, Mark, Philip and Vivian

#### Saturday (Harding House)

##### Introductions (10.30-11.00)

- Review agenda
- 5–10 minutes each to describe our own backgrounds and interests and our reasons for getting involved in PLoS.

##### Mission and vision for PLoS (11.00-12.00)

(Some general discussion about PLoS and Open Access publishing will provide useful context for later topics, and will help us to develop a common PLoS 'message'. )

- The goals of PLoS – see first sentence of business plan.
- The goals of the PLoS launch journals, and 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> tier journals.
- How does Open Access publishing affect the stakeholders of scientific publishing – readers, authors, librarians, scientific societies, publishers?
- Where will PLoS/Open Access publishing be in 1, 2 and 5 years?
- How will the success of PLoS be measured?
- Is this the type of info that would be useful to summarize in a FAQ document?

## LUNCH

##### The launch journals (1.30-5.30)

(Brainstorm the features of the journals from the author and reader perspectives – all types)

- One or two first-tier launch journals – Biology and Medicine? **(60 minutes)**
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing high-profile journals? **(30')**
- The primary papers – key features, how to maximize impact **(30')**
- What other types of content will (and will not) be in PLoS journals? Commentary, reviews, advertising, etc. **(30')**
- Size, frequency
- Online functionality (eg electronic dialogue on published papers) **(30')**
- Journal names **(15')**
- How will these journals improve on the competition? **(15')**

- What happens if Nature/Science adopts an Open Access model? **(15')**
- What are other risks to the success of PLoS journals?
- Do we need any market research?

## **Conclusions**

- Summarize and review actions
- List any items for Monday's phone call

## **Sunday (MIT)**

### **Second- and third-tier journals (9.30-10.30)**

- What's the competition?
- Might any competing journals move to open access?
- How can we work with them/encourage them?
- Journal titles
- Features of the journals.
- How do they differ from first tier?
- When do we launch them?

### **Revisit PLoS mission (10.30-11.00)**

- Do the journals meet the goals of PLoS?
- Are there any other projects that we should be thinking about?

## **BREAK**

### **The editorial process – from submission to publication (11.30-3.30)**

(To begin this, we could each provide a brief summary of the processes that we've each experienced, and consider their strengths and weaknesses)

- The ideal process – maximizing quality and minimizing the pain of rejection **(30')**
- How long should the process take?
- Identify the roles of all participants (authors, in house editors, academic editors, reviewers, production staff) **(30')**
- The role of the existing Editorial Board. Expanding the Board and identifying candidates for Academic Editors. **(30')**
- Job titles – for in house staff and academics. Should each journal have an Editor-in-chief? **(15')**
- Estimate workloads for each participant – how many people do we need in each function? **(15')**
- What are the assumptions regarding submissions? How realistic are they? What happens if they are very wrong? **(15')**
- Where are the weak points/bottlenecks? What can we do about them? **(15')**
- How will non-primary papers be handled – what are the staffing requirements? **(15')**
- How will all this differ in the second-tier journals? **(15')**
- Do we need any market research?

## **BREAK**

### **Editorial policies (4.00-5.30)**

- Peer review – double-blind, non-anonymous, publication of reviews/manuscript history (30')
- Conflicts of interest (authors, referees, editors, staff).
- Copyright policies: is licence agreement finalized; institution might want to retain copyright; can we “repackage content”? See correspondence on Hughes meeting. (30')
- Misconduct (NIH guidelines)
- What constitutes authorship?
- Related articles – do we reject articles in view of related articles on the same topic? Do we send related articles to the same editor/reviewers?
- Potentially dangerous articles
- What constitutes previous publication? Manuscripts, abstracts, talking to journalists?
- Author responsibility for free distribution of materials/methods.
- Exclusion of editors/referees.
- Respecting confidentiality (editors and reviewers)
- Submission of data to databases (sequence, structure, array data, brain imaging)

### **Conclusions**

- Summarize and review actions
- List any items for Monday's phone call

## **Monday (MIT)**

### **First thing (9.30)**

- Finalize and circulate agenda

### **Timeline (10.00-11.00)**

- When to launch first-tier journals? Reasons for timing.
- When to launch second-tier journals?
- Identify key milestones, dependencies and associated target dates for each journal launch.
- Staffing requirements – when to start hiring.
- What other resources do we need?

## **EARLY LUNCH**

### **Conference call (1.00-2.30)**

### **Other issues (2.30-3.30)**

- Key documentation – journal description, editorial policies, technology issues and production procedures, marketing plan, organization and staffing, financial plan, timeline, risk analysis.

- Communication amongst staff, with PLoS Board and with other stakeholders (eg Ed Board). Secure web site for documents. Web-based calendar so we each know where we are.
- Suggestions for PLoS Board (including Europe and Asia)
- Working with societies
- HHMI/Open access powwow

**Conclusions (3.30-4.30)**

- Summarize and review actions
- Review agenda for following weekend

**February 21-23**

**Barbara, Mark, Philip, Rebecca and Vivian**

**Review of notes/actions from previous meeting**

- In particular we should discuss anything concerning the nature of the journals and the proposed editorial process that might be tricky from a production point of view.

**Production and manuscript tracking**

- Discuss and expand the timeline for journal launch – incorporate production milestones
- Design of print and online journals.
- Update on proposal from Rebecca
- Rebecca's style guide and "questions to editors".
- How are articles going to be proofed?
- What level of copy editing will be provided?

**Marketing**

(Brainstorm this from the author and reader perspectives. For authors, we need strong messages to persuade them to submit their work. For readers, we need to develop a sense of excitement about the new journals)

- How to promote PLoS to authors.
- How to ensure we provide a common message about Open Access publishing, and PLoS – preparing a PLoS Powerpoint presentation.
- Reaching authors – conference attendance, lab visits.
- Meeting reports – sharing information.
- A hit list of key pieces of work.
- Promoting PLoS to readers – fitting this in with the Timeline.
- Working with the Editorial Board, and other key contacts.
- Using email signatures.
- Working with societies.
- The PLoS web site – making marketing materials available. FAQ document.
- What happens on Launch Day?
- Do we need a demo site?
- Use of print journals as a marketing tool.
- Do we waive author charges for an initial period?

**Finances**

- Business plan – is any revision required to forecasting in light of our discussions?
- Budgeting – travel, marketing
- Who is in control, and how will information be shared? Monthly accounts?
- Expenses – how to administer.
- Raising additional money through grants, donations.
- Additional sources of revenue – advertising, sponsorship, membership programme (like BMC)

### Other issues

- Archiving – what's the PLoS position?
- Usage stats – how can we provide stats that will enable librarians to see how well used PLoS journals are?
- When will we meet again?

→ PNC

### Useful documentation to bring

Information from PLoS web site

Business plan for PLoS publications (the Word and the Excel documents)

Ed Board spreadsheet

Meetings spreadsheet

Rebecca's RFP

Job descriptions

## Editorial goals of the PLoS launch journals

We spent some time discussing the distinction between first, second and third tier journals, and how they might relate to existing journals in the field. We came to clearer conclusions regarding the positioning of the first and third tiers.

### First-tier journals

- To put PLoS (and open access publishing in general) on the map as a means for the dissemination of high quality science.
- To provide functionality/features that make research articles useful and accessible for all readers (including nonscientists).
- Papers published in PLoS Biology should provide a conceptual advance and should drive the field forward. Some of these papers will be of exceptional general interest, but all will be important within their field. In other words we will not attempt to draw a line between papers that might appear in Science, Cell and Nature, and the best papers in their sister journals and journals like PNAS and Genes and Development. ✓
- Our initial aim will be for PLoS Biology to publish 15 papers per month. We anticipate that the journal will grow over its first two years, such that we will need to increase the frequency of publication to bimonthly and then weekly. We do not feel it is appropriate to launch sister journals within our first tier. } ✓
- As the journal grows, we can devise new approaches to allow readers to select content that satisfies their specific interests.

### Second tier

- The uncertainty we have about the second tier journals is that if we establish journals at this level, we will be competing with many existing society journals, some of whose constituencies might be sympathetic to the goals of PLoS. We therefore run the risk of harming some of the communities we are trying to serve.
- There are some areas where we might want to establish a second tier journal, but we might also collaborate/partner with existing societies to facilitate their conversion to an open access publishing model. It would be helpful to explore the full implications of such an approach to our own financial model.
- The society would need to work according to the PLoS core principles, and to our definition of open access. The benefit to the society is that they would stand to gain 'first-mover' advantage, and boost the standing of their own journals. It can be argued that such an approach serves the needs of the society's membership most effectively. The downsides are the potential losses of revenue and of membership. We can work with the society to help minimize these losses.
- Potential benefits to PLoS could include a small payment for each article published by the society, depending on the contribution from PLoS, a raised profile in the affected communities and a reputation as a constructive force for change. In addition we would be expanding the prevalence of Open Access publishing as a whole.

### Third tier



- We could establish a completely novel forum for the communication of observational, descriptive research of limited impact (in isolation) that is nevertheless worthy of publication.
- This tier would require little editorial intervention, and could be produced at reduced cost. Authors could submit their work via a simple web template, although there might be an additional category of papers that might have been passed down from the upper tiers. Acceptance rates would be high.
- This forum would add up to something much greater than the sum of its parts. It will be more like a database than a journal. Especially as it grows, it would become a valuable resource for the mining of data and information.
- It might encourage the publication of useful data that currently remains trapped in scientists' lab books.

? too low a bar

Overall, the aims of PLoS publishing in these three tiers of journals fully support our general mission. Each tier creates distinct opportunities for innovative publishing approaches.

## Scope of PLoS Biology and Medicine journals

**Landscape:** Basic biology (conceptual advances) – human validation (validate concepts developed in model systems) – clinical trials (validate treatments) – clinical practice (???)

**Question:** Should the journals stay within the realm of research or include clinical practice?

? no  
? yes  
first  
her

### Original Business Plan definitions

PLoS Biology: research biological science at the level of Cell/ Science/ Nature, basic research describing novel conceptual biomedical advances often with insight into mechanism at the level of genetics/ biochemistry/ molecular biology

PLoS Medicine: applied medical research at the level of New England Journal/ Lancet, validation of a therapeutic approach often at the level of clinical trial or smaller scale patient study

### Revised scope of journals

Neither journal described above is an appropriate venue for human validation studies (despite their crucial importance for the translational process). Human validation is here defined as validation of a basic biological insight (based on a non-human model such as mouse model or tissue culture, or on normal human physiology) in a human population. (p.e. the role of interferon plays the same role in human autoimmunity as has been established for a mouse model). Currently these papers appear in diverse journals including JCI, PNAS, J Exp. Med., Nature Medicine, and specialty clinical journals. We proposed that PLoS Medicine should be a home for important human validation studies along with clinical trials. } ✓

**PloS Biology:** Significant conceptual advances in all areas of biology (basic and applied).

- Bioengineering
- Bioinformatics/Computational Biology
- Biotechnology
- Cell Biology (including signal transduction)
- Ecology
- Evolution
- Development (including stem cells)
- Genetics/Genomics/Gene Therapy
- Immunology
- Microbiology
- Molecular Biology (including Structural Biology)
- Neuroscience
- Paleontology
- Pharmacology/Drug Discovery

- Physiology (grey area with PloS Medicine, including aging, vascular biology, endocrinology, etc.)
- Plant Science
- Systems Biology
- Virology

Front half:

- lay summaries (authors: writers)
- feature articles (authors: writers)
- essays (authors: scientists)
- editorials (when there is something to say)
- correspondence (authors: scientists)
- history pieces (authors: scientists)

**PloS Medicine:** from human validation to definitive phase III trials. As a research journal it will not deal with issues of clinical practice. Papers will be selected based on their potential to (eventually) affect clinical practice (less emphasis will be placed on conceptual advances and insights into mechanism).

Medical disciplines: different NIH institutes, does that cover it all?

- National Cancer Institute (NCI)
- National Eye Institute (NEI)
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
- National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI)
- National Institute on Aging (NIA)
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS)
- National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB)
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)
- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)
- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) -
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)
- National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) -
- National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)


no

Springe?

NCCAM?  
Health  
Dispar.?

Front half:

- interpret clinical advances to a wider audience (authors: clinical scientists and writers)
- delineate future path of moving toward clinical practice (authors: scientists)

- integrate journal with various other public resources (NLM, NIH sites, others in other languages, focus on information sources for patients etc. in other countries and languages)
- input from patient advocacy groups 
- Features (authors: writers)

We are less certain about the concept for PLoS Medicine. In the first instance, we would like to get feedback from the Board. Below is a list of other people we could get advice from: ✓

1. clinical journal editors (or ex-editors who might perceive us less as competition):

- Jerry Kassirer (ex NEJM)
- Marcia Angell (ex NEJM)
- Barbara Culliton (ex Nature Medicine)
- someone at the BMJ (there has been some contact between the BMJ and the PLoS in the past, right?)
- Jeff Drazen (NEJM)
- Cathy DeAngelis (JAMA)
- s/o at the Lancet (Mary Waltham worked there for a while)
- s/o at the Annals of Internal Medicine etc

2. translational researchers/administrators

- Barry Collier (Rockefeller) ✓
- Lucy Shapiro (Stanford)
- Sam Hellman (Chicago)
- Eric Neilson (Vanderbilt)
- Karen Antman (Columbia) *business*
- Gerry Fishbach (Columbia) ✓
- Matthias Hentze (EMBL)
- Alan Houghton (MSKCC)
- Lee Hartwell (Hutch)
- Scott Hammer (Columbia)
- Rick Klausner (Gates Foundation)

3. people from pharmaceutical industry/biotech

- Lou Zumstein (Introgen)
- Peter Goodfellow (SKB)

4. medical educators who are working on curricula for medical schools, continued education for practising physicians, etc.